

CALIFORNIA VOTING SYSTEMS

How Different Types of Voting Systems Work

The Secretary of State certifies voting systems for use in California elections. Each county then chooses which certified system it deems appropriate for their voters.

There are currently three different types of voting systems used in California.

Optical Scan

This is a system similar to the technology used for the standardized tests given in schools.

To cast a ballot, the voter:

- Signs in at the polls and receives a paper ballot along with an approved marking device.
- Marks the appropriate position on the ballot. The names of the candidates may be printed on the actual ballot or on a sheet alongside the ballot. After making his or her selections, reviews the ballot and then places the ballot in a secrecy envelope or folder.
- Returns his or her ballot to the poll worker. The ballot is then counted by an optical scanning machine, either at the polling place or at a central location.

Touchscreen/DRE

Touchscreen, or direct recording electronic, systems are the newest type of voting system in California. Rather than marking a piece of paper, the voter casts his or her ballot electronically.

To cast a ballot, the voter:

- Signs in at the polls.
- Either individually or with the aid of a poll worker activates the machine.
- Marks the ballot by touching a screen or using a keyboard style interface.
- After making his or her selections, a review screen will appear allowing the voter to verify his or her choices.
- Casts his or her ballot.

Datavote

Datavote is a punch card voting system, but differs in at least two ways from “chad” producing punch card systems. First, the names of the candidates are printed on the ballots. Second, the system uses a lever punch to prevent chads.

To cast a ballot, the voter:

- Signs in at the polls and receives a paper ballot.
- Inserts the ballot into the tray and under the clear plastic cover from the left side of the machine.
- Marks the ballot by moving the punch lever next to each of his or her selections and completely depresses the lever to punch out a cross (+).
- After making his or her selections, reviews the ballot and then places the ballot in a secrecy envelope.
- Returns his or her ballot to the poll worker.

Specific information for your county:

You can get more information about how to use the specific voting system used in your county on the Internet at www.ss.ca.gov or from your local county elections official. See pages ____ to ____.

**SUBJECT TO COURT
ORDERED CHANGES**